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English Domestic Relations, 1487-1653. A study of Matrimony and Family Life in Theory and Practice as revealed by the Literature, Law, and History of the period. By CHILTON LATHAM POWELL. New York, Columbia University Press, 1917.

Dr. Powell has shown in this work that it is possible for the student of English to produce a doctoral dissertation which is interesting to the man of letters and at the same time profitable to members of other professions. Altho, as he says in his preface, he cannot lay claim to actual priority of inquiry in the field under consideration, he is the first who has trained the searchlight of investigation upon "all possible sources of information—history, law, literature, and actual practice," with the result that his book is valuable to the lawyer as well as stimulating to the scholar.

Whereas matrimony as a legal subject has been pretty thoroly investigated by jurists, Dr. Powell has been able to discover many works hitherto entirely overlooked in this connection, and has corrected a good many errors in conclusions of varying importance. His explanation of the origin of the New England statute concerning civil marriage will be of considerable interest for the student of American institutions and laws. This statute he shows to have been merely the New-World application of Old-World Independent beliefs; for Plymouth was settled by followers of one of the most prominent disciples of that sect, and one of the most distinctive planks in its religious platform was the severance of the marriage ceremony from all church control. The persistence of this law down to the present time, as also the rulings of Maryland—whose early proprietors were Roman Catholic—that some religious ceremony was necessary for any legal marriage and the continuance of those rulings to the present, may furnish the psychologist with interesting data as to the permanence of emotional content in intellectual consciousness.

A review of this book should not leave unmentioned the survey of the famous Henry VIII divorce controversy which is contained in Appendix A. Here Dr. Powell has gathered the first complete English bibliography of the proceedings and controversy, and has shown its ramifications to have reached out into almost every country of Europe. When we consider that in one book alone (*Censurae*) "seven continental universities" return their decisions,

interesting material offers itself for some future candidate for the doctoral degree.

Dr. Powell's most important contribution, however, is the literary significance with which he invests his thesis. A year or two from now many scholars may concern themselves with Domestic Relations as the expression of the thought of an age; for the present Dr. Powell is the first to assign the subject a distinct position in the domain of letters. By means of an extensive bibliography, much of it previously unmentioned, he uncovers an amazing amount of textual material on marriage and divorce. That such a body of literature exists in the legal-sounding domain of Domestic Relations, comes as a surprise to us who are accustomed to regard the topic as either a part of the curriculum of first-year law compiled from exhibits in calf-bound tomes of unwieldy size, or as the practice of hushed court rooms. We are accordingly startled to find that the pen of almost every thoughtful Englishman during the period under examination was occupied with questions concerning marriage or divorce.

Such a discovery would be of little real value were not the influence of this writing discernible in other English literature; for, as in natural and other sciences, the isolation of any element is only sought as a means to its further identification in active combination with other elements, so the recognition of any literary factor is of no *à priori* interest apart from its expression in other thought. Examined thus, the interpolation into the Domestic Conduct Book of chapters on marriage and married life is easily understandable; and traces of this discussion are to be found in the Morality, the Interlude, and even the popular Jest Book, with its play upon the very situations over which those old pamphleteers raised such hue and cry.

Dr. Powell might have gone still farther and enveloped his discussion with a yet more living interest. Let us consider such works as the anonymous *A Curtain Lecture* and Braithwait's *Ar't asleepe husbände?* as forerunners of the famous *Mrs. Caudle Lectures*, and we shall see those fifteenth and sixteenth century ideas progressing, tho ever so secretly, thru the ages, for in Douglas Jerrold's witty pages we meet old coin remoulded circulating as currency of a full two centuries later. Nor does the mint become ever wholly debased. Within the last decade the dead and gone

discussion has revived with increased vigor and become modern and quite up to twentieth-century date. In the light of this dissertation, especially the chapter "Contemporary Attitudes Towards Woman," such novels as *Angela's Business*, *Marriage À La Mode*, *Perch of The Devil*, Mr. Galsworthy's penetrating social studies, and innumerable other expressions of the feminist movement, emerge as the slow but sure development of old Puritan reform.

Perhaps one of the most interesting uses which Dr. Powell makes of his study is its application as a test of Milton's reasons for writing his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. It is a sad commentary on human nature that he who has attained the greatest heights of mental and moral grandeur is most eagerly assailed by the majority of mankind if he exhibit ever his vulnerable heel; and Milton's own nephew raised such yelping at the great poet's heels. According to Philips, Milton composed his *Doctrine and Discipline* in a disgruntled frame of mind produced by his young wife's prolonged absence from home. From this original statement, suppositions have arisen of so varying a wildness that some are unfit for publication. The whole of this ingenious fabrication Dr. Powell believes to have been built on no particle of truth. By proving Mr. Philips inaccurate in other matters, even in those of such extreme family intimacy as the dates of the poet's birth, entrance in Cambridge, publication of *Paradise Lost*, and death, he very sensibly suggests that he be not too readily credited in this particular. He further shows that the order of composition for the *Doctrine*, the *Tetrachordon*, and the *Judgement of Martin Bucer* was far different from that assigned by Philips, and establishes a date for the planning of the *Doctrine* that is almost a year in advance of the one given by Milton's nephew. Add to this the poet's own statement in his *Second Defense*: "When the bishops could no longer resist the multitude of their assailants, I had leisure to turn my thoughts to other subjects; to the promotion of real and substantial liberty. . . . When, therefore, I perceived that there were three species of liberty which are essential to the happiness of social life; religious, domestic, and civil; and as I had already written concerning the first, and the magistrates were strenuously active concerning the third, I determined to turn my attention to the second, or domestic species." These facts, taken into consideration with Dr. Powell's complete argument,

which shows the age of Milton and the immediately preceding age to have been rife with discussions of marriage and divorce, sufficiently make clear why the poet should have turned his thoughts in that direction. Dr. Powell's contentions on the whole are well sustained and convincing; and we must hope that future commentators will refrain from their mud-slinging and indecent suppositions as to Milton's marital relations. In style, the book is lucid and attractive; a surprising amount of heavy and technical matter is handled with a degree of ease that admits of no suggestion of the pedant.

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A Middle High German Primer, with Grammar, Notes, and Glossary
by JOSEPH WRIGHT. Third Edition. Rewritten and Enlarged. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1917. vi + 213 pp.

The first edition of this primer appeared in 1888, the second ten years later. The edition just published represents a work of twice the size and scope of the former editions. As stated in the preface, "the grammatical introduction has been entirely rewritten and expanded to more than twice its original size. The texts have also been nearly doubled by the addition of eighteen poems from Walther von der Vogelweide and selections from Reinmar, Ulrich von Lichtenstein and Wolfram von Eschenbach."

The new edition is the only MHG. reader in English which lays the proper emphasis on linguistics. The MHG. dialects covered by the text are almost exclusively Upper German, a restriction which can scarcely be condemned in a beginners' text. On the whole, the revision puts this text on a par with Wright's other works on the Germanic dialects, and will undoubtedly give it a wide circulation in this country as long as the importation of books from Germany is impossible. As is to be expected of a book written by an Englishman for English schools, there are some faults from the standpoint of American requirements. Teachers in this country who use MHG. as an exercise in translation into the modern German idiom will be disappointed in the vocabulary, which contains not a single NHG. word. It is doubly disappointing that in chapters on phonology a comparison with NHG. is almost entirely disregarded.